



July 15, 1999 10 JUL 19 P3:13

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Docket # 98N-1038, "Irradiation in the Production, Processing and Handling of Food"

To Whom it May Concern:

I am totally opposed to food irradiation. What has happened in the last few decades of food production, transport and storage time, that the FDA would approve such a practice? We must begin to think creatively about ways to provide healthy food within this country; ways that enhance the health of the soils, waters and air, while enhancing our own health.

I am connected to a local food source (a Community Supported Organic Garden) and weekly receive healthy, vital, delicious vegetables, fruit and herbs. There are over 200 families involved in receiving their produce in this way, from a farm that cultivates no more than 20 acres. This is a model of agriculture that is growing rapidly as people become concerned about the quality and safety of their food. Is there a 'prophetic' side to the FDA, that could support and even give incentives to farmers and consumers to grow and buy in this way? Why must we constantly be faced with the shadow side of the FDA with current issues like **allowing the sale of irradiated food** ... (and with proposal to do this) **without any labeling**? What a tragedy if this is the last word about how our nation's food supply is handled.

Knowing that the FDA has already approved irradiation, the next nightmare to deal with is whether or not you will allow the sale of irradiated food without labeling. Will the FDA deny the public, information that is their right to have? What have we become? Why must we even have to write letters like this pleading for our right to know how our food is dealt with before consuming it? Quite frankly, if the FDA does allow the sale of irradiated food without any labeling, I will not buy food not explicitly marked "organic" or "non-irradiated," and I will advise my family, friends, students, colleagues, etc. to do the same. And, let's not pull the wool over the consumer's eyes by calling it something benign-sounding like "cold pasteurization." Many people are catching on to these mind manipulation tactics.

The whole issue is a sad reflection on the signs of the times. We keep manipulating the planet's life system and resources, even the food we eat (and the way we think about it!!) ... all in the name of progress, pursuit of the "American Dream" ... while all around us our decisions cause heightened environmental degradation and diminishment. Where is the hope? What can the FDA model, in order to inspire hope and health for the public? The very least the FDA can do is to **absolutely require labeling of irradiated food!**

Sincerely,

Sister Maureen Wild

Sister Maureen Wild, SC
Director

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